



News Release from Congressman

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SIMMONS HEARTENED BY IRAQI PRIME MINISTER'S EMPHASIS ON AN ADEQUATE IRAQI SECURITY FORCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today expressed cautious optimism upon hearing Iraqi Prime Minister Dr. Nouri Al-Maliki emphasize the importance of an adequate Iraqi security force during his first Joint Session Address to Congress.

"Iraq's Prime Minister is correct that we need to focus on building up Iraq's security forces, because this progress translates into American troops returning home," Simmons said. "Getting Iraqi forces to take control of Iraq's security needs must be 'Job One' for both of our governments."

During the Iraqi prime minister's address to Congress on Wednesday, Dr. Maliki said:

"At a time when political and economic efforts carry high importance, vanquishing terrorism in Iraq depends fundamentally on building up the size and capacity of the Iraqi security apparatus. Building up the security apparatus represents the necessary basis for the withdrawal of the multi-national forces, because it is only when Iraqi capabilities have become complete that the mission of the multi-national forces will be finished. Our forces have achieved a great deal and have gained significant field expertise that will enable them to defeat the terrorists, and to assume control of and spread security in our country..."

Simmons had hoped Maliki would tell Congress and the American people about the progress Iraq was making in taking over security responsibilities. He said afterward that Maliki's comments on the topic were reassuring.

"Dr. Maliki today said that the Iraqi people are working to assume their solemn responsibilities for securing their country," Simmons concluded. "That's good news. I believe it's time for Iraq to show the American people that it is ready to defend itself, govern itself and sustain itself."

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